

POINT OF VIEW

Our View

Another 'justified' shooting leaves family grieving

As the number of shootings by Metropolitan Police Department officers continues to mount, many citizens are beginning to wonder if the people paid to serve and protect them are the ones they need protection from.

In the latest officer-involved shooting, involving a Las Vegas cop, a 40-year-old man was fatally shot after officers claimed he tried to wrestle a gun away from one of them. The scuffle left one officer with a gunshot to the arm and a civilian dead.

While no one will argue that police work is a dangerous line of business where life and death can hinge on split-second decisions, the string of officer-involved shootings and overall police misconduct — dating back to the death of casino floorman Charles Bush from a choke hold by Metro officers — begs the question: Who's policing the police?

A bill to create a civil oversight board passed legislative muster but its fate remains mired in meetings about who deserves to sit in judgment of the police. But Tammy Payton, the widow of the slain man, can't wait for governing officials to get their act together. Her husband is already dead and the officers involved have already been absolved an internal investigation and a jury ruling.

Payton contends the officers intentionally beat and shot her husband, Eric Payton. She called police to her home twice complaining about domestic violence. She testified in court that the police arrived and met the situation with undue force, beating her husband "down to the ground. One policeman," she said, "sat on top of my husband and shot him four times."

Tammie Payton said her husband, a father of three, wasn't violent but did have a substance abuse problem — a doctor's report concluded Eric Payton had cocaine in his system at the time of death. However, she said, her husband didn't do anything to provoke the officers' ire.

The police department has its own Internal Affairs Bureau that investigates complaints brought against officers. And given the inherent trust most of the community places in the police department, it's likely that most jury rulings will come back in the cops' favor.

And should the officer-involved shootings mount — and, undoubtedly there will be times when they are justified — the community's trust in its police force will continue to erode. And more families will grieve.



New Yorkers asking: Where are the jobs?

Special to Sentinel-Voice


A new report circulating privately among state officials and still not publicly available paints a frightening picture of the impact of the new welfare reform laws in New York.

According to the *New York Times*, which obtained a copy of the document, close to 70 percent of 480,000 people who have left the state's plunging welfare rolls since 1996 have yet to get legitimate jobs. In New York City, where 350,000 of former recipients live, only 29 percent have found full-time or part-time jobs in the first three months after being cut off public assistance.

The survey — the first statistical effort in New York to track those who have disappeared from the welfare rolls — compared lists of

To Be Equal

By Hugh B. Price
President
National Urban League



people whose benefits ended during one quarter of the year against records of wages that were reported to the state by employers in later quarters. Employers are required to file reports to the state each quarter.

The study deliberately set a ridiculously low definition of a former welfare recipient's employment: anyone who made \$100 or more in three

months after leaving the rolls.

However, even at this threshold, the report found that the percentage of ex-recipients in New York City who have found jobs has declined sharply from 1996, when the new laws took effect, to 1997.

Just 33 percent of families in New York City who dropped off the rolls from July 1996 through September 1996

showed earnings in the next quarter. That's bad enough. But of those who left the rolls from January through March 1997, only 22 percent did.

The state study doesn't take into account people who are self-employed, work off the books, or have moved out of New York. Nor does it include former recipients whose employers fail to report wage data promptly or are not required to report wages at all, like farm owners; that missing data has led state officials to label the survey too imprecise to yield significant conclusions.

But critics of the new welfare law told the *Times* the study offered "a singular opportunity" to assess the new law's insistence that forcing
(See Jobs, Page 16)

VOICE FROM THE HILL

Bill won't resolve unequal treatment of Africa

By George Wilson
Special to Sentinel Voice

For years, many have been seeking a balance between how the U.S. government deals with Africa versus its foreign policy treatment of other nations.

When Europe needs a helping hand or the markets in Asia get a little shaky, American dollars flow, hoping to ease the pain.

Conversely, when African countries call for help, money trickles in. Africans are usually told by the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund that they have to devalue their currency and engage in what is known as "structural adjustment" as a condition for funding. The latter generally guarantees that the recipient will spend a sizable chunk of

its revenues paying back the loans.

Into this cauldron of disparate treatment rides a bill known as the Africa Growth and Opportunity Bill. The legislation is cosponsored by Charles Rangel, D-N.Y., and Phil Carney, R-Ill.

According to its authors, the bill will put the African continent in a position to trade with the United States. This largely illusional yellow brick road is supposed to lead to jobs and an increased quality of life for Africans. However, any student of history knows how these types of arrangements have really worked in the past.

During a floor debate, Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr., D-Ill., reminded his colleagues that, historically,

Africans have come out on the short end of the stick when deals are cut with outsiders. He noted that the earlier African trade policy involved African kings and potentates selling other Africans to

shipping companies owned by whites, who then sold them as slaves. Perhaps the congressman is onto something.

According to the *Economic*
(See Africa, Page 16)

Nevada's Only African-American Community Newspaper

LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice

GRIOT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, INC.

Nevada's only African-American community newspaper.
Published every Thursday by Griot Communications Group, Inc.
900 East Charleston Boulevard • Las Vegas, Nevada 89104
Telephone (702) 380-8100
Fax (702) 380-8102

Contributing Writers:
Kim Bailey
Angela Khristin Brown
Lee Brown
Loretta Arrington
Diamond Ross
Sharon Savage
John Stephens III
Fred T. Snyder
Yvette Zmaila
Photographers:
John Broussard
Jonathan Olsen

Ramon Savoy, Publisher-Editor
Lynnette Sawyer, General Manager
Marcello Sawyer, Copy Editor
Willis Brown, Production Manager
Don Snook, Graphics
Ed & Betty Brown, Founders

Member: National Newspaper Publishers Association
and West Coast Black Publishers Association